

1959
Vol. I

AMERICAN MANUFACTURING
IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

by

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No. 24
June 24

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Editorial Research Reports
1156 Nineteenth Street, N.W.
Washington

AMERICAN MANUFACTURING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

INTEREST among American manufacturers in market potentialities for their products in foreign countries has been growing steadily since World War II. More and more companies have expanded exports from their plants at home; licensed patents and processes to foreign producers in exchange for royalties or a share of profits; or established subsidiary companies or branch factories abroad. The last-named of the three main ways of penetrating foreign markets has attained special importance in the past decade. The huge dollar investment poured into foreign production facilities by American business has forged strong private economic ties with many countries.

Ten years ago, exports of non-military goods and foreign sales of goods produced abroad by American companies each amounted to about \$12 billion. By 1958, U.S. exports had risen to \$16.3 billion, while American companies producing in foreign countries rang up sales estimated at \$30 billion. Net earnings of American business from operations abroad exceeded \$3.3 billion in 1957, latest year for which the figures are available.

These earnings were derived from direct private investments valued by the Department of Commerce at \$25.3 billion. Actually, direct private investments abroad—as distinct from indirect or portfolio investments, i.e. investments in foreign securities¹—are worth much more. Department of Commerce figures are based on book value, or original cost of plant and equipment, rather than current market value, and the totals do not include those American holdings abroad which represent less than 25 per cent ownership in a foreign enterprise. *Business Week* recently hazarded the statement that total direct private investment “in foreign branches, subsidiaries, and affiliates may be worth \$50 billion.”²

¹ American investments in foreign securities stood at \$8.3 billion in 1957.

² “U.S. Industry Migrates Abroad to Tap Markets of the World,” *Business Week*, Jan. 3, 1959, p. 29.

The Commerce Department total for direct American investment in foreign countries has tripled since 1945, when it neared \$8.3 billion, and more than doubled since 1950, when it stood at \$11.8 billion. Most of the huge dollar investment abroad in the past decade has gone into (1) facilities for production of basic industrial materials (chiefly petroleum, but also iron, copper, and other materials in demand here and abroad) and (2) manufacturing plants whose products have been sold mainly in foreign markets. More than 3,000 U.S. companies are now engaged in foreign production; they include 99 of the nation's 100 largest industrial corporations. Working alongside American companies producing abroad are a growing number of American management and consulting firms, engineering and contracting outfits, and foreign branches of U.S. banks and insurance companies. *Business Week* reported on Jan. 3: "Many executives now predict a doubling in sales from foreign operations in the next ten years. At the same time, they doubt that exports will increase by as much as 50 per cent in the next decade."

SHARE OF MANUFACTURING IN INVESTMENT GROWTH

A substantial share of the increase in direct investment abroad will go into manufacturing. Many forces are at work to make it attractive for American manufacturers to build or expand facilities in other lands. One is the rising cost of manufacturing at home for export. Another is the existence of trade barriers whose effect is to make it more profitable for American business to operate within a foreign market than to try to penetrate it from the outside. Most important is the rise of income in many countries of the free world; markets are expanding for everything from toasters to pharmaceuticals, from bulldozers to modern business machines.

Direct investment in manufacturing today constitutes about one-third of all American private investment abroad. In 1957, \$7.9 billion of the \$25.3 billion directly invested in other countries was in manufacturing facilities; it has been estimated unofficially that the dollar totals rose in 1958 to around \$8.5 billion and \$28 billion, respectively. The total for manufacturing would be much higher—perhaps up to \$11.5 billion—if the Commerce Department included in that category the part of petroleum investment of American companies that is devoted to refining and marketing.

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DIRECT U.S. INVESTMENTS IN MANUFACTURING ENTERPRISES ABROAD (in millions of dollars)

All areas	Canada	Latin America	Western Europe	Other
1929	1,813	820	231	629
1936	1,709	799	192	611
1940	1,925	943	209	639
1950	3,831	1,897	780	933
1953	5,224	2,418	1,149	1,294
1957	7,918	3,512	1,693	2,077
				636

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce.

Manufacturing investment has grown, since World War II, at approximately the same rapid rate as total direct investment abroad. The sums put into manufacturing facilities since 1950 have at least doubled in each of the traditional strongholds of American foreign investment—Canada, Latin America, Western Europe. In 1957, 92 per cent of the capital of American industry invested in manufacturing abroad was in these regions—44.4 per cent in Canada, 21.3 per cent in Latin America, 25.3 per cent in Western Europe. Of the \$1.7 billion laid out by American manufacturers to build and equip plants in Latin America, more than one-third was invested in Brazil, another third in Argentina and Mexico. Well over one-half of the \$2.1 billion directly invested by U.S. manufacturers in Western Europe in 1957 was expended in the United Kingdom; one-fourth in France and West Germany.

EXAMPLES OF EXPANSION OF OVERSEAS OPERATIONS

Hardly a week passes without new announcements by American corporations of plans to commence or expand manufacturing in foreign countries. In the chemical and allied products industry, for example, the Du Pont Company has jumped its foreign business to a point where 8c of each sales dollar is earned outside the United States. Du Pont recently completed a new orlon plant in the Netherlands; it is building neoprene and polyethylene plants in Canada and Northern Ireland; a paint plant under construction in Belgium will serve the growing European automobile industry. Monsanto Chemical is establishing a European Common Market base in Italy in partnership with an Italian firm. Dow Chemical formed subsidiaries in Switzerland and Venezuela last year. Union Carbide spent \$29 million in 1958 setting up or enlarging facilities in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, England, India, Italy, Mexico, and Scotland.

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The Ford Motor Company is preparing, via Ford of Canada, to produce an all-Australian car to compete with the Holden, turned out by General Motors down under. Chrysler acquired an interest in the French Simca last year and announced in April of this year that Simca cars would be assembled in a Mexico City plant to meet the rising demand for automobiles in Latin America.

The Underwood Corporation recently set up Underwood Italiana to manufacture office machines; Smith-Corona completed acquisition of a calculating machine company in West Germany; Burroughs is getting ready to meet increased demand in the Common Market area by expanding productive facilities in France. Ex-Cell-O recently took over a German machine tool concern. Timken is constructing a \$10 million roller-bearing plant in France and is considering an additional plant in Brazil. Container Corporation has acquired a majority interest in a large German paper-making firm.

Reynolds Aluminum, in partnership with a British company, captured control of British Aluminium, Ltd., earlier this year. Kaiser Engineering recently joined an Indian company in plans to build an aluminum plant in India. Goodyear has announced plans to build a \$7 million tire factory in France. Firestone soon will complete a tire plant in Portugal and plans to enlarge operations in India and in Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela. L. C. Boos, vice president of U.S. Rubber Co.'s international division, said in May that "Future competition for foreign tire and tube markets will be on the basis of local manufacturing, not domestic exports."

Attractions in Foreign Manufacturing

UNDERLYING every decision by an American company to produce abroad has been the desire to expand its markets and thus add to its profits. Henry Kearns, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for International Affairs, told a House subcommittee last Dec. 1: "American business will, of course, support our national foreign policy. But, in the strictly economic sense, American companies invest abroad for just one reason—to make money by doing an efficient

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production job." Kearns pointed out that "There are other considerations, of course, but each is directly related to the profit motive." It is obvious that increasing numbers of American concerns are finding it more profitable to supply foreign markets with goods produced abroad instead of exporting goods produced in the United States.

PARTICULAR INDUCEMENTS IN THE CASE OF CANADA

The case of Canada is in many ways unique. What makes it so is that American corporations have built plants and facilities in the dominion almost as if it were another state of the American Union. The proximity of Canada, plus fundamental likenesses in political climate, economic traditions, tax laws, corporate and financial structure, and popular tastes have put direct U.S. investments in that country in a special category.

For many years, but particularly since the end of World War II, American industry has been attracted by Canada's great natural wealth and potentialities for growth. At the present time, four-fifths of all foreign capital invested in Canada is owned in the United States. This contrasts with the position at the end of World War I when the greater part was supplied by the United Kingdom.

U.S. corporations now control about half of Canada's manufacturing industries and a little more than half of Canadian industry as a whole. Attaining a dominant position was facilitated by the fact that American companies moved in on the ground floor after World War II. O. J. Firestone, economic adviser to Canada's Department of Trade and Commerce, cited figures on May 21 to demonstrate that "a comparatively small amount of capital will suffice to establish control of an enterprise in its early state." Fifty-five per cent of Canada's industry was controlled by American corporations in 1957, he said, although only 31 per cent of all investment funds came from the United States and 67 per cent from Canadian sources.

Canada's rates of economic growth and population increase since the war have been among the highest in the free world. Huge mineral, forest and power resources still wait to be tapped. Canadian markets for both basic materials and consumer goods are expanding rapidly. Canadian resentment over the practices of some American corporations has become a problem in recent years, but

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Canada is eager for capital and large-scale investment north of the border is expected to continue.

POSTWAR DOLLAR SHORTAGE AND OTHER INFLUENCES

The postwar dollar shortage was not among the considerations that triggered the great flow of American capital to Canada, but in other countries the so-called dollar gap offered direct encouragement to location of American plants abroad. The demand for dollars with which to buy American goods was enormous in Europe, Latin America, and most other parts of the free world after World War II, but the dollar resources of these countries, gained through exports or through assistance from Washington, were far from adequate to satisfy demand. As a result, most countries used dollars mainly to meet imperative import needs and to build up reserves.

Scores of American manufacturers found established or potential export markets cut off by inability of overseas customers to get dollars. They concluded that the way to sell abroad was to produce abroad. Governments in Western Europe and Latin America welcomed the new enterprises; in addition to reducing dollar needs, they would help to create jobs, boost living standards, and increase the country's ability to export. In the United Kingdom, for example, American subsidiaries or Anglo-American companies now provide more than 375,000 jobs for Britishers and account for more than 10 per cent of all exports from Britain. More than 30 per cent of Latin America's exports are produced by American-controlled corporations, and the proportion is even higher for Canada.

Although the world-wide dollar gap is no longer a problem,³ most leading countries of Europe and Latin America continue to follow certain policies which make it tempting for American producers seeking foreign sales to locate within their borders. On the one hand, direct investment has been encouraged by positive measures—tax incentives and investment guarantees. Among the tax incentives used to attract foreign capital have been high depreciation allowances, rates on corporation income that are lower than in the United States, arrangements for deferral of payments, and liberal deduction provisions. Antoine Pinay,

³ Easing of British restrictions, June 8, on importation of a long list of consumer goods from dollar countries marked virtual elimination of the discrimination against dollar imports that had been effective in the United Kingdom in varying degrees since the start of World War II in 1939.

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French finance minister, said in New York on May 26 what holds true for many countries in addition to his own: "We offer every desirable guarantee to foreign investors. The transfer of profits is guaranteed, as is the repatriation of investments in the event of liquidation."

Import quotas, tariff barriers, and exchange restrictions have been on the decline in Western Europe, but American manufacturers still find some obstacles of this kind along the path to foreign markets. The preferential tariff system which is part and parcel of the European Common Market represents a new hurdle in the way of American exports to the Continent.

OPPORTUNITIES IN NEW EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET

The European Economic Community or Common Market, instituted on Jan. 1, 1958, is expected to boost direct American investment in Western Europe substantially. The Common Market is intended to promote coalescence of the economies of Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany over a period of 12 to 15 years.⁴ The plan provides for reduction and ultimate elimination of tariffs and quotas on trade among the six member countries and for a common tariff on imports from the outside.

First tangible steps toward the ultimate goal were taken on Jan. 1, 1959, when an over-all 10 per cent reduction of tariff duties and an over-all 20 per cent enlargement of import quotas were put into effect with respect to trade within the community.⁵ A British proposal to create a free trade area which would embrace all 17 European countries in the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, including the Common Market countries, bogged down last year.⁶ But a stopgap plan limited to Austria, Denmark, Great Britain, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland—the so-called "outer seven"—is currently under consideration. Further action on it is expected at a meeting in Stockholm around the middle of July.

⁴ The European Economic Community was established by the Treaty of Rome, signed March 25, 1957, by the six member countries and later ratified by all of them. See "European Economic Union," *E.R.R.*, 1957 Vol. I, pp. 225-242.

⁵ The six countries agreed, late in 1958, to extend a part of the 20 per cent quota enlargement to imports from the 11 other nations belonging to the Organization for European Economic Cooperation. At the same time, they agreed to extend the initial tariff cut to imports from countries signatory to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

⁶ Under the original British proposal, countries in the free trade area would exchange goods among themselves and with Common Market countries on the same basis as that on which the latter trade with one another, but they would retain the right to fix their own tariffs on trade with outside countries.

Such radical developments are bound to concern American firms interested in selling in the affected markets. In the first place, it is much tougher for U.S. exports to penetrate a preferential tariff area than an individual country, at least in the short run, because of competition from producers within the whole area. Many enterprises in Common Market countries already are drawing up merger plans, and more efficient use of Western Europe's labor and capital is expected to bring sharp pick-ups in productivity and output. But the Common Market offers attractions to American companies which establish manufacturing facilities within its borders. The community has 165 million inhabitants, representing a market potential nearly as great as that of the United States, and eventually it will be similarly unencumbered by internal trade restrictions. Free movement of goods, labor, and capital across national borders within the area will enable American companies to reach the entire market if they manufacture in a single country.

The impact on American industry of the Common Market is graphically demonstrated by what has happened recently in the Netherlands. In the three-year period 1955-57, 21 American branch plants were established in that country; in 1958, after the Common Market had come into existence, 23 additional American companies set up shop there. Comparable figures are not yet available for the other countries in the community, but a Department of Commerce official wrote recently: "It may be assumed that a similar situation prevails in most other Common Market countries and that the influx of U.S. investment there has also been considerable."⁷

Walter Hallstein, chief executive of the Common Market, pointed out on a visit to New York, June 16, that American investment in the community still amounted to only about 1 per cent of the total capital investment. He said the opportunities for U.S. private investors were "practically unlimited." Hallstein told reporters: "We need new capital and 'know-how' from all sources. American industrial capital is particularly welcome." He added that American branch plants, and partnerships with enterprises in the community, would be of special help in developing mass production and marketing in Western Europe.

⁷ Walter Buchdahl, "European Common Market: A Progress Report," *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, April 6, 1959, p. 6.

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Success of the European Common Market may strengthen the hand of persons who want to set up regional common markets in Latin America. Although supporters of that idea admit that its realization may be some years away, they have been working diligently to overcome opposition in business and industrial circles and opposition on the part of leaders preoccupied with the difficult economic problems of their separate countries. A move toward economic integration below the Rio Grande came on May 19, when the trade committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America unanimously approved a resolution setting forth common market principles and establishing a group of experts to frame a draft agreement.

PRODUCTION COST ADVANTAGES IN WESTERN EUROPE

Much has been said about lower labor costs abroad in tariff debates extending back more than a century. Ernest R. Breech, board chairman of the Ford Motor Company, said earlier this year: "Traditionally, American industry has been able to meet and beat wage competition because of its greater capital investment, its superior plant, equipment, management methods, and economies of scale." Breech added, however, that in Europe, "we have now largely lost this advantage, particularly in industrial production."

The National Industrial Conference Board recently published a study on the comparative costs of producing in the United States and abroad. The study disclosed that, on the whole, labor costs were lower in foreign countries and overhead costs slightly lower; material costs, on the other hand, were considerably higher. Balancing out the labor, overhead and material costs, it was found that only in Great Britain and Western Europe was there a pattern of lower production costs than those that prevail in the United States. In Canada, Latin America, and Australia production costs were usually higher than in the United States.

The N.I.C.B. study noted "the absence of correlation between countries in which production costs are low and those in which American capital investment is high." It said the decision to manufacture in a country to which exports have been limited by transportation costs, trade barriers, or currency restrictions may be quite divorced from production cost considerations. "There are other motives besides low production costs that lead firms to

locate abroad. One is the promise of increased sales in local and adjacent markets."⁸

In big American manufacturing industries, where competition is keen, each company puts great stress on holding or enlarging its share of the market. Thus when one industrial giant has made a sizable direct investment in a foreign country, its chief competitors usually have felt compelled to do likewise. Although it is impossible to assess the prominence of this factor in company decisions, it is generally taken as a matter of course that a company risks impairment of profits if it fails to cultivate a developing market. A company's foreign operations are not necessarily more profitable than its domestic operations; for manufacturing as a whole, in fact, the annual profit yield on direct American investment abroad has generally run a little lower than the yield at home. But, as pointed out by *Business Week* last Jan. 3, "a 5 per cent addition to consolidated gross sales that comes from [a company's] overseas operations often builds up the over-all profit margin by a much larger percentage."

Aspects of American Production Abroad

EXAMINATION of some of the characteristics of direct U.S. investment abroad suggests that American manufacturers are in good position to retain or expand their foreign operations. In the first place, corporations eager to tap foreign markets have, in the main, steered clear of less developed countries. Although this has been due primarily to profit considerations, it has been caused also by political instability; American manufacturers have been inclined to keep out of countries where they considered confiscation or harassment a threat. Statistics for 1957 show that only about \$130 million, or less than 2 per cent of total private American investment in manufacturing abroad, is found in the underdeveloped (and in many cases unstable) countries of Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.⁹

⁸ Theodore R. Gates, *Production Costs Here and Abroad* (1958), pp. 21-22.

⁹ Ninety-two per cent of the manufacturing investment is in Canada, Latin America, and Western Europe, and six per cent in industrialized or more developed countries like Australia and Japan. For discussion of current proposals to encourage private investment in underdeveloped countries, see *Congressional Quarterly, Weekly Report*, June 19, 1959, p. 826.

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In the second place, the favorable position of American corporations operating abroad is attested by the fact that the billions of dollars they have put into manufacturing facilities in foreign countries since World War II have gone mostly for production of goods in high demand. Capital of U.S. companies is not invested in "depressed industries." In Western Europe, for example, the postwar investment has been concentrated where U.S. manufacturers had a development lead, either in the product itself or in production methods. Examples are business machines, automobiles, and oil refining equipment. More recently, the big push has been in electronics and chemicals and allied products. J. H. Dunning, a British expert on direct investment, wrote recently of American industrial operations in the United Kingdom: "At present . . . the United States representation is almost entirely confined to industries supplying those products which, if they were not actually discovered in the United States, were first exploited on any scale in that country."¹⁰

ADAPTABILITY OF COMPANIES TO FOREIGN CONDITIONS

The willingness shown by American corporations to vary the form of foreign investments according to conditions prevailing in other countries has itself become one of the reasons direct investments have continued to mount. Appearing before a House subcommittee last Dec. 1, Assistant Secretary of Commerce Kearns outlined seven major forms taken by direct private investment: (1) wholly-owned subsidiaries or branches of American companies, managed by Americans; (2) establishments in which there is American majority ownership and management; (3) American-managed establishments where ownership is equally divided with foreign interests; (4) foreign-managed establishments where ownership is equally divided; (5) U.S. minority ownership with American management; (6) U.S. minority ownership with foreign management; and (7) contractual investment with fixed procedures for retiring the U.S. investor's interest.

In recent years there has been a definite tendency for the American manufacturer to team up with a company in the host country. Foreign participation in ownership of U.S. manufacturing operations abroad is estimated to have risen from about 20 per cent in 1950 to about 25 per

¹⁰ J. H. Dunning, "The American Stake in British Industry: I," *London Times*, April 22, 1959.

cent today. A variety of reasons are responsible for the increase. Canada and some Latin American countries offer added tax incentives to encourage joint ventures. Partnership arrangements have become more common in Western Europe—as American corporations have shown increased disposition to “spread the risk,” take advantage of the growing supply of private foreign capital, and acquire the option of branding the product with a foreign label or an American label depending on public attitudes.

Most American corporations have settled on that form of direct investment which suits their interests and is as little likely as possible to provoke the ill will of the people or government of the host country. In the case of the United Kingdom, Dunning reported that two-thirds of the American-controlled manufacturing operations there have adopted “the principles of United States management.” However, “only 15 per cent employ American managing directors and an even smaller proportion of their United States personnel.” He concluded that “In the great majority of cases a realistic blending of American ideas adapted to a British environment would appear to have been achieved.”¹¹

In Canada, many American corporations have been trying to develop more of a “Canadian outlook.” A Royal Commission observed in a report on “Canada’s Economic Prospects” in 1957 that “Many Canadians are worried about such a large degree of economic decision-making” lodged in the hands of non-Canadians. Referring to the large share of Canada’s industry owned by U.S. interests, the commission said that “Canadians should have more tangible assurance” that foreign-owned companies “make decisions that are in the best interests of Canada.” Robert C. Heim, vice president of the Empire Trust Co. of New York, said on May 22 of this year that a 1958 survey conducted by that bank disclosed a trend toward increased Canadian managerial representation in U.S. subsidiaries in Canada and a growing awareness of the “political advantages” of Canadian participation in the ownership of these subsidiaries.¹²

FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF COMPANIES ACTIVE ABROAD

Two other characteristics of direct investments abroad point to a strengthening of U.S. operations in foreign coun-

¹¹ J. H. Dunning, “The American Stake in British Industry: II,” *London Times*, April 23, 1959.

¹² See “Relations With Canada,” *E.R.R.*, 1957 Vol. I, pp. 393-398.

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tries. First, a great many companies have set up foreign operations, but the biggest share of direct investment has been undertaken by strong corporations with long experience and backed by large financial resources. In the United Kingdom, for example, where more than half of American direct investment in Western Europe is located, about 400 U.S. subsidiaries or Anglo-American firms are currently engaged in manufacturing. The 35 largest of these control 80 per cent of total U.S. manufacturing capital in the United Kingdom. Nearly 60 per cent is controlled by the ten largest companies.

Secondly, many corporations have found it increasingly easy to expand foreign operations as sales of goods produced abroad have grown. In 1957, 40 per cent of the funds invested in productive ventures in foreign countries came from retained profits generated by existing overseas enterprises. Only 19 per cent came from parent companies or from other U.S. sources.¹⁸

Domestic Effects of Foreign Investment

SOME CONCERN has been voiced about adverse effects on the American economy of direct private investment abroad. Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.) submitted a resolution, April 21, calling for a Senate investigation "of the full consequences of the investment of American capital abroad." He said the investigation should have the dual purpose of recognizing "the massive values of the investment of American capital abroad" and getting "the facts on some of the very grave problems it provokes."

Proxmire explained that his proposal had been inspired by the fact that "In at least two industries vital to employment in my state—machine tools and tractors—American companies have recently in effect transferred part of their production from Wisconsin to foreign countries." This meant that "Jobs formerly held by Wisconsin working men are now held by working people in other countries."

The *Wall Street Journal* reported, March 19, that growing numbers of American machine tool firms were "trying

¹⁸ About 17 per cent came from foreign sources and 24 per cent from depreciation allowances.

to regain lost business, and to head off future losses, by producing abroad, either by purchasing foreign companies or by setting up new plants overseas." The same paper reported on April 20 that earlier that month International Harvester, world's largest maker of farm machinery, had imported a shipment of tractors produced in one of its foreign plants for sale in the United States. Ford Motor Co.'s tractor division for some time has been an importer of Ford tractors manufactured abroad. The list of farm equipment companies contemplating similar action is on the increase. Moreover, International Harvester expects to bring in other types of equipment; plans call for hay balers from the company's plant in France and grain planters from its Swedish unit.

Concern over foreign production by U.S. manufacturers for the American market usually has been discussed in the context of rising competition from foreign producers in general. This country's merchandise export surplus fell from \$7.9 billion in 1957 to \$5.1 billion in 1958, due largely to a sharp decline in exports.¹⁴ For a variety of reasons, exports of coal, steel, mill products, cotton, vegetable oils, foodstuffs, industrial and textile machinery, construction and mining equipment, tractors and automobiles declined. At the same time, imports of such manufactured products as agricultural machinery, petroleum products, foodstuffs, sugar, sawmill products, electrical items and, most notably, automobiles increased in 1958. Sen. Proxmire said on April 21: "Reliable reports indicate that this export of American jobs has just begun. The combination of available American capital, American automation and know-how, fused with lower foreign wages, is not only cutting a terrible swath in the export market for American factories; it is beginning to cost them some of their domestic U.S. markets."

During the first quarter of 1959, exports continued to fall and imports to rise at a faster rate than last year. The country's export surplus in the first quarter of 1959 was less than one-third of what it had been in the first three months of 1958. Imports have risen most sharply in oil, machinery, and vehicles. The biggest reductions in exports this year have been in crude materials and finished manufactured goods. Such developments have swelled protectionist sentiment among many American producers. The

¹⁴ Exports dropped from \$20.9 billion in 1957 to \$17.9 billion in 1958; imports remained almost unchanged at \$13 billion in 1957 and \$12.8 billion in 1958.

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Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization, the Tariff Commission, the President, and the Congress have been subjected to strong pressure to clamp down on imports of everything from heavy electrical power equipment to mink skins.

CONTINUED BACKING OF LIBERAL U.S. TARIFF POLICY

The administration, numerous business establishments, and most labor unions nevertheless strongly oppose any general increase in tariffs. Assistant Secretary of Commerce Kearns said on May 20: "It is axiomatic that international trade, for the benefit of all, must be a two-way exchange unencumbered by artificial barriers or restrictions." He noted that "Our purchases from other countries in 1958 continued to provide American consumers with goods and commodities which they desire for better living" and "our world customers with the dollars they need to buy American exports." He pointed out that 1958 was a recession year in many industrial countries and said that "Taking a second look at our exports in 1958, we find they were greater than in any other year in our history, with the exceptions of 1956 and 1957."

The A.F.L.-C.I.O. has long been a supporter of the reciprocal trade program. Its Executive Council said on Feb. 24: "We recognize that removal of the barriers to trade among the free nations of the world contributes to the economic progress and political stability of our own country and to the welfare and strength of the entire free world." The council urged American efforts to raise labor standards all over the world so that American workers and employers "will not be faced by unfair competition from foreign imports based on unduly low wages and labor standards in the exporting country."¹⁵

Business Week observed on Jan. 3: "The kind of tough foreign competition that American industry now faces in its home market would once have produced a sharp increase in American tariff rates. That has not happened and isn't likely to, largely because so many companies realize that a broad move to raise U.S. tariffs would limit their opportunities for doing profitable business abroad." If American imports were restricted by higher duties, it would be harder

¹⁵ Walter P. Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers, on May 12 gave general endorsement to this view but said he favored some kind of "penalty" on imports of foreign cars manufactured by underpaid workers. Reuther did not spell out the difference between a "penalty" and a tariff quota restriction.

to transfer the profits earned by American companies producing abroad. Moreover, it stands to reason that foreign companies hurt by higher U.S. tariffs would be tempted to urge their governments to discriminate against the foreign operations of American firms.

Sen. Proxmire, in proposing his investigation, acknowledged "the massive values" of direct American investment abroad and said: "I emphatically prefer private investment to government investment abroad. It is more efficient. It is subject to the iron discipline of the profit system, so it will not be wasteful. And of course it is to the great interest of America and the free world to assist other free countries to grow strong economically. This kind of investment does that." But he urged Congress to "find a way to encourage private American investment abroad while providing some kind of proper safeguards for American jobs."



EDITORIAL RESEARCH REPORTS

FOUNDED 1923

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1959
VOLUME I

AFFILIATED WITH CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY
1156 NINETEENTH STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

EDITORIAL RESEARCH REPORTS

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